Arboretum
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN–MADISON

Ecosystem Studies, grades K–2

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- Students will participate in active investigations, while exploring the plants and animals of the Arboretum's ecosystems.
- Students will collect data and make comparisons of plant and animal lifecycles and interactions.
- Students will identify ecosystem resources and services necessary for survival.

PROGRAM DETAILS

Length: 1.5 hours
Grade level: K–2
Season: All
Student to naturalist ratio: 10:1 for kindergarten, 15:1 for 1st and 2nd

Option 1: An overview of all the ecosystems: forest, prairie, wetland, garden. Includes short investigations.

Option 2: Choose one or two of these ecosystems to focus on: forest, prairie, wetland, or garden. Includes a longer, more in-depth investigation.

PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

- Hike to chosen ecosystems.
- Use tools to make observations of plants and animals in their ecosystems (hand lenses, observation cups, nets, insect containers).
- Collect, observe, and release insects, spiders, and microorganisms from the forest floor, pond, prairie, or garden ecosystems, when possible.
- Identify animals and their food sources.
- Identify external structures of plants and animals and share ideas of their functions.
- Compare and contrast plants and animals in different ecosystems, as well as the characteristics of the ecosystems.

STANDARDS ADDRESSED

Wisconsin Standards for Environmental Literacy and Sustainability
ELS.EX2.B.e
ELS.EX3.B.e
Wisconsin Standards for Science
SCI.LS1.C.K
SCI.LS1.A.1
SCI.LS4.D.2
Next Generation Science Standards
K-LS1-1
1-LS1-1
2-LS4-1